

## **Lake Powell Update Friday August 14, 2015**

EPA LNO Bill Robberson arrived in Page, AZ last night.

OSC Dunkelman and LNO Robberson met with Congresswoman Kirkpatrick (AZ) and staff today in two separate sessions instead of three as originally planned:

The first meeting included Congresswoman Kirkpatrick and staff; Robert Varner, Superintendent of the Page, AZ Unified School District plus its Press Officer and two members of the High School Student Body; Page City Mayor Bill Diak; Chamber of Commerce members including Executive Director Judy Franz and Congresswoman Kirkpatrick's sister, also a Page, AZ Chamber of Commerce member of its Board of Directors; and a few interested citizens including Ms. Irene Jones, a member of the Navajo Nation. The meeting went very well, with cordial discussion regarding local and regional concerns, multiple short presentations by Dunkelman and Robberson, authentic Q&As and an expressed appreciation for the work that EPA is doing to protect the people, the environment and the economy of the area.

The second meeting with Congresswoman Kirkpatrick took place at the Antelope Point Marina on Lake Powell, with two representatives of the NPS Glen Canyon National Recreation Area and three representatives of the resort and sport fishing industry on Lake Powell. This meeting also went very well with one-on-one conversations and group discussions regarding long and short term business concerns and short presentations by Dunkelman and Robberson explaining the nature of the situation and related EPA sampling efforts. The meeting was followed with photo-ops by the Congresswoman's Twitter and Facebook documentation staff.

Late this afternoon OSC Dunkelman and two START contractors departed on a NPS vessel for the first leg of travel up Lake Powell. Their objective is to reach the San Juan Arm of Lake Powell sometime tomorrow, where they will initiate sampling of sediment and surface water samples beginning at the point where the San Juan River enters confluences of Lake Powell. As mentioned previously the NPS has been very supportive of EPA Lake Powell Branch activities during this response, including their hosting of EPA's satellite ICP, our lodging in Page and on Lake Powell, and their contribution of this vessel and an operator to support this effort. The plan is to collect surface water samples along the main axis of Lake Powell upon their return to Page late Saturday and early Sunday. This sampling effort is expected to continue from today (Friday) through Sunday afternoon.

Additionally, there is a pre-existing sampling expedition planned by USGS and NPS that is scheduled to begin August 19. This joint sampling event is scheduled to last one to two weeks and is presently focused on evaluating mercury distribution throughout the water column and sediments of Lake Powell. At this point in time it makes sense to have this sampling event expanded to include analytes related to the Gold King Mine response. OSC Dunkelman and LNO Robberson are working closely with NPS to identify the details necessary to potentially integrate EPA response sampling needs with those of the expedition. This may also present an opportunity for EPA personnel to participate in the extended sampling expedition.

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality provides an update on their website at <http://www.deq.utah.gov/Topics/Water/goldkingmine/index.htm>. The most recent update states "DOH does not expect that recreational or agricultural use of the San Juan River will result in adverse effects in people, livestock, or crops. It is still recommended that recreational users carry their own drinking water and not rely on filtering or purifying river waters." Language was added today stating, "The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) continues to advise agricultural producers along the San Juan River in Utah to avoid using river water as an irrigation

and livestock watering source.”

Utah has scheduled a coordination call between local, state, federal, and tribal partners for each morning at 8:00 a.m. MDT to discuss the mine-water contamination of the Animas and San Juan Rivers in CO/UT and its potential impacts to Utah, to establish the public health messaging for the event, as well as to establish criteria upon which an "all clear" signal can be given for unrestricted use of the potentially impacted waters. The call in number is 1-977-820-7831, passcode: 665806#. They would like an EPA representative who is willing to speak for EPA regarding the analysis and conclusions of its Water Quality sampling data.

The Arizona Department of Water Quality has collected samples in Glen Canyon and anticipates having results early next week.

LNO Robberson assisted NPS Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA) in development of updates on its Website and Park "Phone Hot line", and NPS has also posted links to the Utah DEQ and US EPA incident websites.

Congressman Rob Bishop will be visiting Glen Canyon on Monday. This trip was scheduled prior to the Gold King Mine incident and will provide an opportunity for the NPS and EPA to provide an update. EPA Lake Powell Branch representatives Dunkelman and Robberson have been invited and encouraged by NPS GCNRA Superintendent Todd Brindle to participate.

In addition to the agencies and individuals mentioned above, today OSC Dunkelman and LNO Robberson have also worked closely with the NPS Resources Director and PIO in coordinated with USGS, City of Page Utilities, ADEQ, AZ Geological Survey, Utah DWQ, Utah DEM, Utah DNR, IHS, ATSDR, Coconino County Public Health and Coconino County PIO.

The issue remains regarding who or what agency is or will be willing to make a definitive statement regarding the water quality of Lake Powell... specifically if and when it might be safe for drinking and for recreation contact.